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**Subject:** POLITICO's Morning Energy, presented by America's Pledge: First SAB meeting to eye EPA reg rollbacks — Cramer hits Trump's legislative director — DOE: U.S. generally 'well prepared' for grid hacks

By Kelsey Tamborrino | 05/31/2018 10:00 AM EDT

*With help from Eric Wolff*

**PRUITT'S SAB STORY:** EPA's independent Science Advisory Board will meet today and Friday for the first time since Administrator Scott Pruitt barred scientists on the committee from receiving EPA grants and boosted its ranks with industry representatives — and the group's agenda is packed. The SAB will look at Pruitt's "secret science" proposal to bar EPA from using studies that don't make public all their data, as well as the Clean Power Plan repeal, Pruitt's decision to relax 2022-25 auto emissions standards, changes to the 2016 methane rule for new oil and gas wells and effort to repeal a rule regulating emissions from "glider" trucks — and that's not all.

**A lot to dive into:** The heavy slate of issues is unusual for the advisory board, Pro's Alex Guillén reports. Several current and former SAB members say it's unprecedented for the board to consider reviewing so many regulatory actions. But like green groups and critics of Pruitt, the SAB scientists say EPA has declined to share information about its regulatory rollbacks. "The agency has not been forthcoming about how they're developing the relevant science work products," said Chris Frey, a professor of environmental engineering at North Carolina State University and a SAB member since 2012.

**EPA keeps quiet:** SAB has been conducting twice-yearly reviews of EPA's planned regulatory actions since 2012, members said. It's an effort designed to enable the advisory board to help guide EPA before its rules are finalized. But this time around, the SAB's working groups say EPA wasn't being forthcoming with information. "Basically they just didn't provide us with any answers," said Frey. "That kind of put us in a position where all we can really do is say EPA has not identified the science or any plan to review it, and clearly there are science issues that are in the proposed rule."

**What to expect:** It's not immediately clear whether the full SAB will vote today to advance the reviews. But Frey noted that some of the members appointed by Pruitt had been on the working groups, giving him hope that the full board will back the recommendations to look deeper into the regulatory rollbacks. Should SAB adopt them, Alex reports, it likely would mean setting up special subcommittees that include current members plus outside experts to question EPA further. Read more [here](#).

**IT'S THURSDAY!** I'm your host Kelsey Tamborrino, and Entergy's Rob Hall correctly identified former President William Howard Taft as the first to see a Major League Baseball game in his hometown of Cincinnati. For today: Name all the presidents who were married while in office. Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to [ktamborrino@politico.com](mailto:ktamborrino@politico.com), or follow us on Twitter [@kelseyam](#), [@Morning\\_Energy](#) and [@POLITICOPro](#).

**THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT:** In an unusual attack on the White House's legislative affairs director, North Dakota Rep. [Kevin Cramer](#) blamed Marc Short explicitly for the party's legislative failures in the Senate, including ending the Obama rule on flaring and venting from oil and gas wells. After POLITICO published a story outlining the awkward dynamic between [Heidi Heitkamp](#), Cramer and the White House, Cramer told

North Dakota radio host Rob Port that he had done some digging and believes that there "are some people in the White House that think, you know, the president's too friendly too her," Burgess Everett [recaps](#).

**Moreover, Cramer laid specific blame at Short's feet** for failed GOP efforts in the Senate to roll back an Obama-era regulation limiting flaring and venting, as well as repealing Obamacare. Heitkamp voted against gutting that flaring rule, something Cramer has criticized her for, in particular. "If Marc Short was very good at his job, you know, we'd have a repeal and replacement of Obamacare, we'd have a replacement of the venting and flaring rule," Cramer said. Read that story [here](#).

**PRUITT'S MEDIA BLITZ:** The EPA administrator visited Rosslyn, Va., on Wednesday to sit for interviews with two conservative media outlets. One was conducted by Boris Epshteyn for his Sinclair Broadcasting segment, "Bottom Line with Boris." (Watch that [here](#).) The other was with the Washington Free Beacon, where Pruitt repeated familiar talking points in defense of the ongoing scandals and investigations that have surrounded him over the past few months. Pruitt said he still has President Donald Trump's backing, noting that Trump has "spoken very strongly and consistently" about their working relationship. "It's been intense the last couple of months, but he's been very encouraging, very empathetic and very supportive rather consistently," Pruitt said. The administrator also discusses the Paris climate agreement, "The Bachelorette" and, of course, baseball in the 13-minute segment, which you can listen to [here](#).

**GRID AND BEAR IT:** In response to an [executive order](#) signed last year, the Energy Department released a new [report](#) Wednesday that said senior government officials and electric sector executives don't know enough about how energy companies could recover from a disruptive cyberattack, and those companies aren't thinking about cyber threats enough when building out their supply chains. While the report mainly hammered home some long-known problems with the grid, DOE highlighted how grid resilience efforts suffer because of "gaps in incorporating cybersecurity concerns, including planning for long-term disruption events, into state emergency response and energy assurance planning." Generally, however, the report said the U.S. is "well prepared to manage most electricity disruptions." Read more from Pro's Eric Geller [here](#).

**WHERE'S PERRY?** Energy Secretary Rick Perry delivers remarks this morning on critical infrastructure at DOE's Texas-Israel Cyber Security Conference in Dallas. The department also announced that Perry would address the DOE's annual Cyber Conference in Austin on Monday. During both events Perry is expected to [discuss DOE's new](#) Cybersecurity, Energy Security and Emergency Response office, as well as efforts at DOE to address cyber vulnerabilities in the energy sector.

**ABOUT THAT GLIDER RULE:** The New York Times' Eric Lipton [tweeted](#) out new documents late Wednesday that give new details into the controversial Tennessee Technological University study on truck emissions that Pruitt used to consider rewriting part of the Phase 2 truck rules. "The letters obtained via open records request show that the principal investigator at Tenn Tech who conducted study funded by Fitzgerald, the company that makes the so-called glider trucks, disavowed the work, saying that it had been distorted in a fraudulent way," Lipton [tweeted](#).

**BY THE NUMBERS:** The federal government spent \$13.2 billion across 19 agencies during fiscal 2017 on programs related to climate change, [a report](#) from the Government Accountability Office says. That's an overall \$1.5 billion increase across the federal government over fiscal 2016, Pro's Anthony Adragna reports. And it's an increase of \$4.4 billion since fiscal 2010, according to the report, which was request by House Science Chairman [Lamar Smith](#). Read [more](#).

**CALIFORNIA GETS CHARGED UP FOR EVs:** The California Public Utilities Commission is expected to approve a \$589 million [program](#) for its four investor-owned utilities to build out their electric vehicle charging infrastructure. The plan is part of the implementation of California's aggressive greenhouse gas law passed in 2015. Most of the money — which will ultimately come from ratepayers — will go toward setting up electric

vehicle charging stations and related infrastructure. California leads the nation by far in electric vehicle sales and adoption.

**NO MAJOR FLAWS IN FERC PROCESS:** Auditors in the DOE inspector general's office said they found no major flaws in FERC's process for reviewing interstate natural gas pipelines, according to a new report. But they also flagged concerns about FERC's transparency and how it handles public comments. The auditors said that "nothing came to our attention to indicate that FERC had not performed its due diligence" in how it balanced public benefits of a proposed project with its adverse impacts. But the report also said regulators' "had not fully ensured" that the certification process was transparent to those who want to participate, and it hit the agency's eLibrary documentation system as difficult to use, Pro's Darius Dixon reports.

**\*\* A message from America's Pledge:** America's Pledge is flipping the script on climate action. One year after the federal government announced it would pull out of the Paris Agreement, 2,700+ U.S. cities, states, and businesses are saying, "We Are Still In." See how far we've come: <https://politi.co/2koAHZb> \*\*

**FERC DENIES PENNEAST REHEARING:** FERC on Wednesday denied a rehearing sought by the Delaware Riverkeeper Network and Surland Conservancy on the controversial PennEast pipeline. Commissioner Richard Glick issued a separate statement on the agency's use of tolling orders. "This proceeding, in particular, illustrates the need for prompt action on rehearing requests," Glick wrote. " ... I also have serious concerns regarding the Commission's practice of issuing conditional certificates — which, notwithstanding their name, vest the pipeline developer with full eminent domain authority — in cases where the record does not contain adequate evidence to conclude definitively that the pipeline is in the public interest."

**GREENS ENDORSE DE LEON OVER FEINSTEIN:** 350.org co-founder Bill McKibben and 350 Action said Wednesday it is backing Kevin de León in his bid to challenge California Sen. Dianne Feinstein. McKibben said de León, a current California state senator, "has been a strong champion of clean energy — and an effective one, using his power in Sacramento to make change happen against the strong opposition of the fossil fuel industry." Read De León's candidate questionnaire answers here.

**SELC SUES OMB OVER REORG:** The Southern Environmental Law Center sued the Office of Management and Budget Wednesday for its failure to release information under FOIA on the reorganization at federal agencies that manage public lands. SELC says OMB has not provided requested information under a November 2017 FOIA request, nor has it made a determination or otherwise responded to the request, and has subsequently stopped communicating with SELC. The center is seeking "all records in the custody or control of OMB submitted in connection with Executive Order 13781 by any agency responsible for the management of federal public lands," including the Forest Service, National Park Service, BLM and the Fish and Wildlife Service. The EO in question directed each agency head to submit a report to OMB outlining proposed changes to their agency. Read the lawsuit.

**CRES BACKS McMASTER IN SOUTH CAROLINA:** Citizens for Responsible Energy Solutions will announce a \$175,000 television and digital ad buy today highlighting South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster's record on clean energy. "First as lieutenant governor and now as governor, his commitment to the development of advanced energy technologies like natural gas and solar power is helping the state's economy and job market thrive," CRES Chairman and Executive Director James Dozier said.

**McCARTHY NAMED DIRECTOR OF HARVARD CENTER:** Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health announced former EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy will lead its newly launched Center for Climate, Health, and the Global Environment. Under McCarthy, C-CHANGE announced a collaboration between Harvard University and Google to reduce the use of harmful chemicals in construction and renovation projects. "C-CHANGE will ensure that cutting-edge science produced by Harvard Chan School is actionable — that the

public understands it, and that it gets into the hands of decision-makers so that science drives decisions," McCarthy said in a statement.

**MOVER, SHAKER:** Mitch Schwartz started this week as communications director for Jason Crow's campaign in Colorado's 6th Congressional District. Schwartz previously worked for SKDKnickerbocker.

— **PUSH Buffalo, a sustainable housing group,** announced Rahwa Ghirmatzion as its new executive director as of August 2018. Ghirmatzion has served as the organization's deputy director since 2017.

## QUICK HITS

- Exxon aims to boost production even with any climate rules, [Associated Press](#).
- Buffett utility to be first in U.S. to reach 100 percent renewables, [Reuters](#).
- Chevron shareholders reject climate change resolutions, [Washington Examiner](#).
- It's not every day you see a tropical depression over Indiana — but here it is, [The Washington Post](#).
- U.S. solar manufacturing poised to boom in wake of Trump tariffs, [Bloomberg](#).
- Oil prices steady after big drop on OPEC talks, [The Wall Street Journal](#).

## THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

**\*\* A message from America's Pledge:** One year after President Trump announced plans to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, America's Pledge is showing the world that U.S. cities, states, and businesses can lead us towards our goals - with or without Washington. <https://politi.co/2koAHZb> \*\*

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